

02 APR 1996

Mahathir-information

MALAYSIA STRIVES TOWARDS ENHANCING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

KUALA LUMPUR, April 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government intends to put in place the necessary infrastructure for Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor as quickly as possible.

He said the multimedia super corridor would not only enhance the country's information technology but also encourage multimedia corporations to locate their business units and research and development facilities here.

He called on everyone -- government ministries, universities, private sector, politicians -- to work together towards giving the country the leading edge in technology.

"We have great plans about information technology," he said at a forum for chief executive officers on the concept and implementation challenges of Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here.

The Multimedia Super Corridor is an area, 15km by 40km, encompassing the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Putrajaya and the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) which will be developed as a high-growth centre.

To facilitate foreign "brain workers" to come to the country, Dr Mahathir said, certain adjustments would be made to the regulations and laws.

He said an area between KLIA and Putrajaya had been identified to be developed into a beautiful city and a good place stay.

Dr Mahathir, who chairs the National Information Technology Council, said the government would welcome suggestions from potential investors on what was needed for the multimedia super corridor.

As information technology was a new field, he said: "We need to constantly hear views from outside and people who have the expertise in this area".

He added that during his trip to Japan recently he visited Sony Corporation and Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT) to look at their latest technology in multi-media.

Describing their technology was extremely advanced, he said Malaysia might have to use their knowledge.

Asked by reporters later on whether NTT had given any indication that it was going to relocate part of its R&D operation here, Dr Mahathir replied that NTT had said it was going to look into the possibility.

"We think that they are keen to make use of these facilities that we are putting in and the infrastructure.

"They need to expand their research and I think they will come in," he added.

Asked to elaborate, Dr Mahathir said NTT would team up with the Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Ministry, Telecoms Malaysia and the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems (Mimos) and form three teams, with each team looking into different areas of cooperation. -- Bernama

AZZ JK